

Chicago West Clergy Wives Peer Learning Group

Session 1:

Sept 12, 2020

1:00-3:00 pm

Theme: Time

Schedule

30 minutes:

1. Prayer and Silence
2. Introductions: Name, years married, kids, parish, work.
3. Introduce TIM
  - a. Is anyone here familiar with TIM? Note that TIM is a ministry of the Orthodox Church of America, which is intended to be pan Orthodox. They identified a need first in clergy and then for clergy wives to gather them together in mutual support but with an emphasis on how to do parish ministries more effectively. TIM has a 470k Lilly grant to implement this program. We have a budget for our meetings that allows for costs related to our meetings (food, space rental, books, etc), as well as a stipend for me, the facilitator. There is also \$1500 for one extraordinary experience without the facilitator. This group is free for the first year. Thereafter, there will be a \$300 fee, but hopefully paid for by your parish or Metropolis. We will assist you with this so that you can continue.
  - b. Explain how I got involved with TIM and introduce myself

20 minutes

4. Icebreaker questions. Write down on card, then discuss:
  - a. Tell us something about yourself that no one would guess about you
  - b. Favorite place in the world and why
  - c. What if anything are you reading right now? If you're not reading anything, what's on your bookshelf you'd like to get to?

30 mins

Discuss difference between a peer learning group vs a support group:

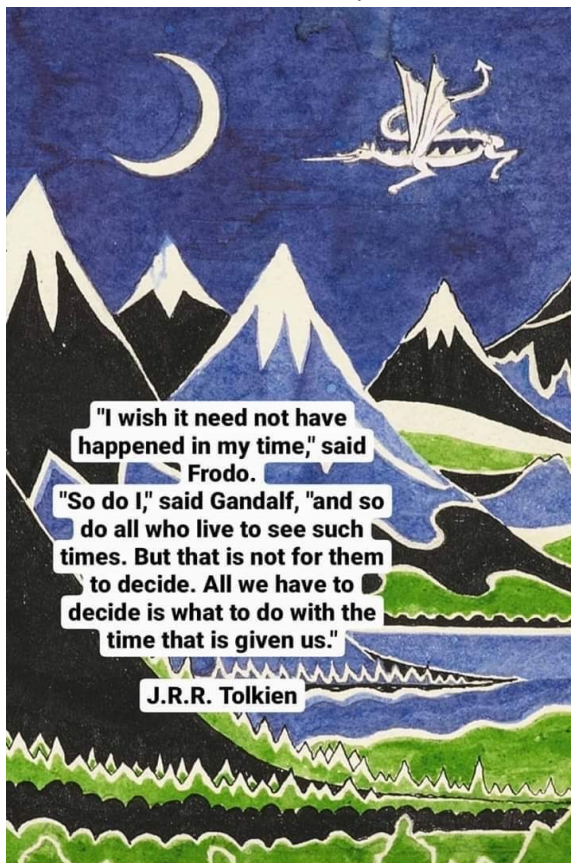
5. What is your understanding of what this group is for? write down
6. What are your expectations of this group? write down
7. Discuss answers
8. Describe difference between a peer learning group and a support group
  - a. support group is open ended and unstructured. It is problem centered. Clergy wives have told me they can sometimes turn into gripe groups and that's not what this is about. Support will naturally grow out of this group, but we're not AA for Clergy wives. A support group is run by a group leader, usually someone who has the same problem that is a topic of the support group. The assumption of a support group is that there is a problem to be solved.
  - b. A peer learning group is different because it offers an opportunity for personal and spiritual growth. It is topic focused, not problem focused and those topics will be chosen by the group. It assumes health. It is led by a FACILITATOR who is there to organize,

provide structure and facilitate the discussion. The facilitator does not necessarily have to be just like the members of the group, which is why I was recruited to do this even though I'm not a clergy wife. READ description from notes.

9. Create Charter to define what we want this group to be, including some ground rules. Include rules for outside of group times. Include "ok to pass."
10. Charter or Vision Statement (who we are, why we're here, how we will conduct ourselves, what parameters we will agree upon). Start first with why are we here? WHAT do you want to gain from being in this group? Then what might some ground rules be for participating.
11. Create ground rules. Consider "**Be open. Be confidential. Be awkward (or be vulnerable?).**"

20 minutes

12. We're going to start with our first activity. Each time we meet, I will bring in pictures, videos, songs, questions that will stimulate discussion that hopefully will help us form a deeper connection to each other and stimulate thought and learning for ourselves.
  - a. Gandalf quote—"I wish it need not have happened in my time, said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us."
  - b. What is your reaction to this quote? What does it mean to you? Take a moment and write down your thoughts about this quote.
  - c. Thoughts about what Frodo said? About Gandalf's response?
  - d. How has God set us up to handle this moment?



13. Show the jellybean video: [https://youtu.be/BOksW\\_NabEk](https://youtu.be/BOksW_NabEk)
- a. what's your reaction to this video?
  - b. How do you go about deciding what to do with your time?
  - c. How are you using your time? How would you like to use it differently?
  - d. How has this time of COVID19 been positive for you and your family?
  - e. What can you decide to do with your time that you haven't yet?
  - f. does this inspire you to do anything in particular?

15 minutes

14. Discuss plans for future meetings.
- a. Poll--Zoom or in person (if not 100% in favor of in person, inside, we will do Zoom so that the default honors the people who are at risk and uncomfortable with the risk of exposure)
  - b. Poll--Saturday or weeknight?
  - c. Brainstorm ideas for locations, noting requirements of:
    - i. private (no kids and that includes husbands)
    - ii. quiet
    - iii. wifi and tv to show youtube videos
    - iv. ability to spread out and move around a bit
    - v. place to eat
    - vi. comfy seating
  - d. Brainstorm ideas for topics (eg. fruits of the spirit; managing stress; impact of tech on health and wellness; ANYTHING)
15. It's a rainy, gloomy day. Write a list of activities that energize them. Discuss. (did not do this)
16. Monday is Elevation of the Cross (did not do this)
- a. what does this feast day mean to you? (write down) What does the symbol of the cross mean to you?

Chicago-West  
Clergy Wives Peer Learning Group  
Charter

**Goals and Hopes for the Group:**

- Fellowship
- Pan Orthodox
- Support
- Spiritual Growth
- Share joys and frustrations in a safe setting
- Strengthen faith--take it off the back burner
- Develop connections that have depth, go beyond the surface
- Learn from more experienced clergy wives
- Inspiration

**Ground Rules**

- Confidentiality
- No swearing
- No judgement
- Keep the group a safe space--be able to say anything without fear of repercussions
- Be honest
- Ok to pass if don't feel ready to share
- Prioritize the group and group meetings
- Respect other jurisdictions whose practices or traditions are different than your own.

*Be Open. Be Confidential. Be Vulnerable.*

